

American Farmer Has Eye On Environment

Kevin Seibert
Student Teacher

Pequea Valley High School
A natural leader, Benjamin Ehrhart is a product of and for his environment.

Growing up in Narvon, in rural southern Lancaster County, Ehrhart was outdoors as much as possible, exploring nearby creeks, streams, woodlands, and fields. This early interest in nature helped him decide early his life's goal of working with the environment.

While he appeared to be following his older brother, Matt, and his father, Phillip, Ehrhart elected to follow the FFA course at Pequea Valley High School

because of its environmental education option/concentration.

"It was a way for me to get a head start on my career goals. I was working with resource management for four years prior to college. It gave me a firm understanding of the field, its possibilities, and the future need for it," Ehrhart said.

A junior at Penn State, Ehrhart expects to graduate next year with a bachelor's degree in environmental resource management. He has achieved dean's list honors for the past three semesters. After graduation, he is considering a master's degree in environmental pollution control. He is involved with a research project at Penn

State with sedimentation basins and design modifications to improve them.

However, before he reaches graduation, Ehrhart hopes to have his American FFA degree, for which he recently applied. This degree will cap a seven-year FFA career which has been filled with a myriad of honors and leadership roles.

"Ben is a hard-working, responsible, goal-oriented person. He knows where he wants to go. He's a leader that can take control," said Clair Witwer, his high school agriculture education instructor.

During high school, Ehrhart attended and served as a counselor

for the Lancaster County Conservation Leadership school and was selected to attend the state conservation leadership school at Penn State. Witwer supervised Ehrhart's agriculture experience projects, which entailed wildlife habitat improvement and identification. He also worked with the chapter project on stream bank improvement.

He placed first in the county and state FFA aquatic resources competition.

Ehrhart has excelled in other FFA areas and received the Star Greenhand Award, Chapter BOAC Volunteerism Award, and was the regional star candidate for the Keystone degree in the specialty division.

In leadership roles, he was the state delegate to the national convention held in Kansas City. He served on the National Courtsey Corp. in 1990, as Lancaster County FFA secretary in 1991-1992, served on the 1993-1994 State FFA officer team, and served as eastern vice president. He coordinated the Lancaster County Leadership Training Conference. He has been both a counselor and the ROPES course director of the N.Y. State FFA Camp.

At Pequea High School, Ehrhart also excelled in academics and sports. He was a member of the high school's national honor society. He received a varsity letter in wrestling and soccer. He was a sectional and district wrestling champion and state qualifier his senior year.

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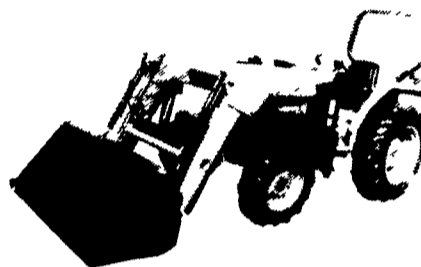
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